

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ABIDJA 06770 181541Z
ACTION SS-25

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O R 181500Z JUL 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9652
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

S E C R E T ABIDJAN 6770

EXDIS

HELSINKI FOR CAT DELEGATION - MARTIN CHESHES

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, PCAT, US, XA, UR
SUBJECT: US-SOVIET CONVENTIONAL ARMS TALKS - AFRICA

REF: (A) ABIDJAN 6731; (B) STATE 178349

1. DCM FRIEDMAN AND I CALLED THIS MORNING ON FOREIGN MINISTRY'S
SECRETARY GENERAL, HONORE POLNEAU, AND CHEF DE CABINET, AGOUSSI
DABA (REFTEL A), AND DISCUSSED CONCEPT OF REGIONAL RESTRAINT IN
ARMS TRANSFERS. EMPHASIZING EXPLORATORY NATURE OF ANY DISCUSSIONS

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WE MIGHT HAVE WITH SOVIETS ON APPLICATION OF THIS CONCEPT TO
AFRICA, WE COVERED PRINCIPAL TALKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTTEL B
AND SAID WE HOPED IVORIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD VIEW HELSINKI DISCUS-
SIONS AS A POSSIBLE MEANS OF REDUCING GREAT POWER RIVALRY IN
AFRICA.

2. POLNEAU STATED THAT HE COULD NOT, REPEAT, NOT GIVE US CON-

SIDERED IVORIAN GOVERNMENT REACTION TO OUR DEMARCHE, ALTHOUGH
IVORIANS APPRECIATED OUR ADVISING THEM IN ADVANCE OF THIS ASPECT
OF HELSINKI DISCUSSIONS. IN GENERAL, GOIC FAVORED ATTEMPTS TO
LIMIT THE VOLUME AND SOPHISTICATION OF ARMS TRANSFERS TO AFRICA.
IT WAS, HOWEVER, ESSENTIAL THAT RESTRAINT ON THE PART OF THE
UNITED STATES AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES BE MATCHED BY SOVIET AND
EASTERN EUROPEAN RESTRAINT. FURTHERMORE, WE COULD NOT IGNORE
THE FACT THAT SOVIET UNION HAD ALREADY SUPPLIED ADVANCED WEAPONRY
TO CERTAIN AFRICAN STATES. IT MIGHT NOT ONLY BE NECESSARY TO TALK
TO SOVIETS ABOUT MUTUAL RESTRAINT, BUT ALSO CONSIDER WHAT COULD
BE DONE ABOUT WEAPONS ALREADY IN PLACE. ENTIRE SUBJECT HAD FAR-
REACHING IMPLICATIONS, POLNEAU CONCLUDED, AND IVORIAN GOVERNMENT
WOULD WISH TO CONSIDER THESE IMPLICATIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE MAKING
DEFINITE JUDGMENT. FOREIGN MINISTER AKE WOULD BE RETURNING FROM
OAU SUMMIT MEETING IN KHARTOUM AT END OF JULY, AT WHICH TIME
POLNEAU WOULD ACQUAINT HIM WITH OUR DEMARCHE.
STEARNS

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